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ABSTRACT

Faculty development through peer observation, faculty revitalization through curricular change, and interdisciplinary work are addressed in this newsletter issue. The peer observation process is primarily directed toward fine-tuning or adjusting existing competencies, and usually focuses on factors such as questioning, clarity, organization, instructional style, and delivery or presentation skills. The emphasis is on an open, collegial relationship for confronting instructional concerns. A five-step clinical observation model has been employed by the Faculty Development Institute at North Dakota State University. Another programmatic effort was undertaken at Mount Marty College to implement a faculty development program focusing on the curriculum. A group of faculty members were chosen to promote professional growth by communication with outside resource persons or in-house colleagues. Four major program components were interdisciplinary course design and implementation, curriculum evaluation, computer-assisted instruction, and instructional improvement. A transcript of an extensive discussion of interdisciplinary work is also presented, which involved the following members of The Group for Interdisciplinary Theory and Praxis at the University of North Dakota: Kathleen Hulley, Benjamin Ring, and Kristin Sorenson. (SW)

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PLANTINGS

A newsletter of the Bush Foundation-funded faculty development programs in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota

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Number Four April 1983

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# PLANTINGS

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## Faculty Development Through Peer Observation

It's doubtful that any single incident motivated the trend toward faculty development, but there is a story about a Harvard professor that could have served as an inspiration. The story revolves around Dr. Charles W. Eliot, one of Harvard's eminent professors and author of numerous books. One time, a visitor on that campus asked Dr. Eliot how Harvard had gained its prestige as the greatest storehouse of knowledge in the nation. Dr. Eliot replied, "In all likelihood, it's because the freshmen bring us so much of it and the seniors take away so little." No matter what provided the motivation, faculty development programs are ultimately aimed at increasing student learning to reverse the trend noted by Dr. Eliot.

Faculty development has been defined as a process designed to foster personal and professional growth for individuals within a respectful, supportive, positive organizational climate having as its principle aim better learning for students and continuous, responsible self-renewal for educators and programs.[1] To accomplish this, most faculty development programs make provisions for improving teaching. There are two basic approaches for improving instructional skills. One is to focus on "fine- tuning" present skills. The other is directed at learning new teaching skills.

The Faculty Development Institute (FDI) at North Dakota State University is a comprehensive three-year program which provides faculty the opportunity to pursue either or both of these two basic approaches for improving teaching as a means to enhance student learning. Governance and management of the program is carried out by eight program coordinators composed predominantly of active faculty members representing different administrative units on campus. The program includes six components implemented through special seminars, noontime workshops, colleague groups, faculty development grants, and peer observation teams. Faculty participation is voluntary and separate from any of the evaluation procedures used for making personnel decisions. Instead, it's planned as a complement to, *not* a component of, the promotion and tenure processes. This separation is a necessary condition of faculty development programs to provide a positive climate and atmosphere of trust among participants.

[1]Dillon-Peterson, Betty, ed., *Staff Development/Organization Development* (Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, 1981), p. 3.

One of the first efforts of the FDI was to initiate the peer observation process in the Fall of 1981. To prepare for this, the program coordinators participated in a three-day workshop to become skilled in using the clinical supervision model chosen for the peer observation process. Dr. Gerald Skoog and Dr. Robert H. Anderson of the College of Education of Texas Tech University served as consultants and conducted the workshop.

The coordinators were divided into two observation teams, each led by one of the consultants. Four faculty members on campus agreed to be observed to provide training for the coordinators. Each team of coordinators carried out two different observations in regular classes on campus. This was followed by a third observation where one of the consultants conducted a discussion lesson on a life experience topic with a group of about one dozen volunteer upper division students.

The strength of this workshop was that it provided actual involvement in the process. Further, the observations were organized with the intent of providing each coordinator exposure to observation of one small and one large lecture class, as well as of a small group discussion situation.

Armed with skills gained through the workshop, the coordinators were prepared to transmit the process to other faculty. Because the peer observation component was viewed to be the least familiar to faculty, orientation meetings were scheduled to introduce the purpose and process. Supplementary handouts were distributed which provided a detailed explanation of the process along with a list of possible factors to be observed and analyzed.

### Purpose

The peer observation process is primarily directed toward fine- tuning or adjusting existing competencies to improve and enhance student learning. Thus, attention is usually given to specific factors within broad categories such as questioning, clarity, organization, instructional style, and delivery or presentation skills.

Using the clinical model of peer observation introduced by Skoog and Anderson, the emphasis is on an open, collegial relationship for confronting instructional concerns. The process is systematically designed to produce a supportive and nonjudgmental relationship among team members. Classroom observations involve gathering or recording reality-

based data. Each observation is individualized to meet the needs identified by the team member to be observed.

**Process**

Because the intent of peer observation is to focus on teaching behaviors or teaching-learning interactions rather than on the content being taught, the peer observation teams were composed of faculty from different disciplines. Initially, each team consisted of four members. If the team members and their teaching schedules were compatible from term to term, then teams were encouraged to remain together.

Decisions regarding faculty assignments to teams were based upon avoiding incompatible teaching schedules and duplication of disciplines. Each FDI coordinator was assigned to one or two teams to serve as a team leader and consultant in getting the process underway.

Individual teams had an organizational meeting with their coordinator to become acquainted with each other, share some of their instructional concerns, and clarify understandings of the process and team member roles. The teams were operationalized in the following manner: Professors A, B, C, and D are team members. Professor A has opted to be the observee and professors B, C, and D (plus one coordinator) are the observers for the first observation. For the second observation, professor B could be the observee and professors, A, C, and D would be the observers. Team members continue to rotate through a cycle, then begin the rotation again.

**Peer Observation Cycle**

The clinical observation model that was adopted included five basic steps. To carry out these steps requires a commitment of time totaling approximately two hours. As some teams gained experience with the cycle, they applied various adjustments to facilitate their needs and either reduced or expanded the time accordingly. The steps in the observation process include the following:

I. Pre-Observation
   A. Establish contract (Observee present)
      1. Objectives are briefly described for the lesson to be observed
      2. Class activities are briefly described including what students will be doing and what mode(s) of instruction will be used (lecture, lab, recitation, etc.)
      3. Mechanics for the observation are determined
         a. Time?
         b. Place?
         c. Where to sit? etc.
      4. Observee identifies what specific teaching factors are to be observed (limit to approximately three factors)
      5. Clarify what type of data is expected or acceptable
   B. Develop plan for collecting data during observation (Observee absent)

II. Observation of teaching (20 minute segment of the class)
   A. Collect data
   B. Record time log of events

III. Analysis and Strategy (Observee absent)
   A. *No value* statements made by team members for the first 10 minutes
   B. Reconstruct observation
   C. Identify positive aspects
   D. Suggest alternatives based upon data collected
   E. Agree upon what feedback will be communicated by whom

IV. Post Observation Conference (Observee present)

V. Critique of Team's Function (Observee absent)
   A. Was the strategy successful?
   B. Is follow-up action needed?
   C. Was the observee helped?
   D. Did the team members effectively carry out their roles?

**Follow Up**

In addition to the coordinators, 44 faculty volunteered to participate in the peer observation cycle during the first year. After the first cycle of observations, a person external to the process conducted interviews of team members. Reactions by faculty participants were overwhelmingly positive. The process was described as "rewarding," "helpful," and "non-threatening." Team members did mention that when it came time to be observed for the first time, they were surprised at how nervous they were. This phenomenon disappeared for most team members by the second observation. Most teams tried to schedule an observation once every two weeks to accommodate each team member during a ten-week term.

Some unexpected benefits cited by team members were the positive reinforcement from colleagues, new ideas applicable to their own teaching as a result of observing others, exchange of philosophies of teaching across disciplines, and constructiveness of the feedback provided. Initially, some concern was expressed that people involved in peer observations might be mislabeled as "teachers who need help." This has not been the case. In fact, during the second year of the process, one team member received the Fargo-Moorhead Chamber of Commerce Woman Educator of the Year Award.
— *Alberta Dobry, North Dakota State University*

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Jacqueline D. Davis and Robert E. Young, editors, welcome comments, contributions, and queries either by phone (701-777-3325) or post (Box 8161, University Station, Grand Forks, ND 58202).

**To Get to the Good Berries, You Have to Go Through the Prickles: Interdisciplinary Work in Colleges and Universities**

*Once upon a time, in an imaginary forest far away in space and time, a furry woodland creature sat on a log and gave his son some good ole home-spun philosophy. The prickles Papa Woodsie was talking about related to the quality of life in the forest, but he could just as easily have been talking about interdisciplinary work. To help pick our way through the prickles of interdisciplinarity, we talked with several people from the humanities, sciences, and fine arts about the problems and promise they have encountered in interdisciplinary work.*

*In the pages of* Plantings, *we would like to begin a discussion of interdisciplinary work, and we invite readers of this newsletter to respond to the questions raised in this issue with interviews conducted on your own campuses, descriptions of programs, or thoughtful essays about the topic. In the next issue or two of* Plantings, *we will publish these responses.*

*We talked first with Kathleen Hulley, Benjamin Ring, and Kristin Sorenson, members of The Group for Interdisciplinary Theory and Praxis at UND, known as GITAP. This group has become a focal point for interdisciplinary activities on the campus; GITAP sponsors faculty seminars, publishes a lively newsletter titled* Salmagundi, *and maintains a room or "commons" where faculty can meet and work on the business of bridging disciplines in their teaching and research. Hulley is Associate Professor of English and coordinator of GITAP. Ring is Professor of Philosophy and coeditor of* Salmagundi, *and Sorenson is a graduate student in the English language, coeditor of* Salmagundi, *and GITAP's "institutional workhorse".*

*Q: A lot of words get tossed around when you start talking about interdisciplinary work—cross disciplinary, multidisciplinary, intradisciplinary. What is interdisciplinary work?*

R: I've never worried about those words so much. I don't think they have well defined meanings. I thing we're still forming them. I like "interdisciplinary" because it suggests that things fall in between the disciplines involved.

H: Interdisciplinary work is not just a bunch of different disciplines giving different approaches to the same problem.

*Q: That's multidisciplinary.*

H: Yes. Interdisciplinary work is more difficult to achieve. It's an attempt to find a common ground for different problems rather than different approaches to one problem.

*Q: Why do we need interdisciplinary programs?*

S: We need interdisciplinary programs for people like me—and Kathleen and Ben, and I hope many more—who are interested in moving in new directions, asking different, sometimes new, sometimes difficult questions. It's one thing to learn how to use the passwords, frames and methods of an "established" discipline; it's another to see how that discipline is constituted—what it is, what it can't do, where the gaps are, the silences—and then take your thinking beyond its boundaries. Both are valuable, but I'm inclined toward asking bigger questions than any single discipline can answer, taking in as much as I can and seeking some patterns and connections in the mess I end up with.

R: My own answer to that has always been in terms of a question. If you get interested in a question, you will frequently find that seeking the answer to that question doesn't fit nicely in terms of your disciplinary organization. Where the questions lead the questioners across disciplinary lines is where interdisciplinary programs thrive. Where the disciplines demand the questions be reformulated to fit disciplinary orientation is where such programs fizzle.

*Q: What particular skills are required for interdisciplinary work to flare rather than fizzle?*

H: You need skills in analyzing the underlying assumptions of your own discipline and methodology, and revealing that to your students. So that instead of coming in and giving them the word of truth, you show them the assumptions behind the method with which you got at that truth.

*Q: Within your own discipline?*

H: Yes, but then applying that to some of the assumptions underlying the disciplines of the people you are working with. For instance, if you are team teaching a course with a biologist and an English professor, you apply your assumptions to some of the assumptions of biological research, so you're not just teaching a literary course with biological references in poetry. You might be examining instead how literature reflected changes in scientific assumptions. The basic skill is a real analytical skill and a constant ability to analyze your own assumptions and the other assumptions you're looking at.

R: I think the most important of the qualities is to understand how something looks from the perspective of other people involved in the interdisciplinary work, to understand how their discipline makes them see the problem. A lot of interdisciplinary efforts founder on the simple fact that a person from one discipline won't understand that someone from another discipline won't look at things in the same way. They keep demanding that you look at it "our way".

*Q: Are there special personal or psychological qualities necessary for interdisciplinary work?*

H: You have to not be afraid of not appearing to always be the authority. Some of the faculty were reluctant to have students at the Ryan seminar [GITAP's first seminar, conducted by Michael Ryan on the topic of deconstructionism] because they didn't want to make fools of themselves in front of their students. That's a big psychological factor. I think it's good for students to see their professors in the process of learning something.

R: You have to be very sensitive to a lot of personal factors. Interdisciplinary programs are risky. You need to ask what's frightening people. What's making them hesitate? What kind of understanding and assurances can you give them? Many people are afraid to talk about interdisciplinary subjects because they're afraid that they'll expose their ignorance about somebody else's language or strategies. Disagreements can really grow because people formally agree when they haven't agreed at all.

*Q: Out of fear?*

R: Yes. They're afraid to say, I don't understand. And the people who are leading the discussion have to get those things out. They have to work harder than anybody else to understand the concerns of the individual people involved.

*Q: So there is an intimidation factor?*

R: Oh, certainly. Usually everybody's intimidated.

*Q: But they're all intimidated together?*

R: Yes, but they don't know that. They're like the people who are sure that they're the only coward in the group.

*Q: It appears that intimidation arises because of the specialized knowledge of other members of a group. Yet there seems to be general agreement in the literature of the field that good interdis-*

*ciplinary work requires top-notch specialists. What are your thoughts about that?*

R: If by that, you mean people who are recognized in their disciplines, I don't see that as necessarily true.

*Q: What about competent in their disciplines?*

R: You can have somebody who is competent and well informed, but I don't think that means you have to get the expert on medieval art together with the expert on medieval Latin and the expert on the sociology of underdeveloped nations to talk about the problem you want to deal with. The notion about disciplines is one of the most unfortunate things we have instilled in modern society.

H: What I've noticed in scholars in my field who are recognized as being the best, is that they tend to have a much wider base of knowledge than the rest of us. They have these incredible minds that can absorb many fields of knowledge. So I would say that just having a top-notch mind means you know more about any field.

*Q: You mean those incredible minds don't necessarily have a broad education, but a broad way of approaching things?*

H: Yes, a more open way of approaching things. Someone who is really an expert in their field is much less threatened by going outside it.

S: I think that people who are not so good at what they do have a tendency to attach more emotional bravado to thinking they understand the position and value of their work, instead of calmly accepting its limitations and working hard at the particular thing they do—and sometimes branching out.

*Q: Is there any particular setting or environment which seems to work best for interdisciplinary projects?*

H: My best classes occur when we are sitting around a table. A seminar format.

S: What we consider a more formal atmosphere divides everybody up according to their power and puts somebody in authority.

R: I think setting is all important, and I think that's what we know least about. That's where we most frequently make some of our most serious mistakes. You put people in environments that trigger standard reactions and they have standard reactions. Put them around a certain kind of committee table and suddenly they're all behaving like members of an academic committee.

*Q: What kind of setting would you suggest?*

R: I think there has to be a fair amount of informality that doesn't trigger all the signals for territorial protection, which is what many academic environments do. But you need a judicious mix. If you go too far with informality, then most academicians won't believe it's real. In principle, I like the idea of retreats, or whatever you want to call them, where people spend several days together, out of their normal environment. But that's tricky, too.

*Q: Because of the exposure element again?*

R: Exposure, but also because some people find it impossible to take that seriously.

*Q: Because it's not in an academic setting?*

R: Yes. We're off on a fishing trip, aren't we? You want to drink some beer and have a good time?

H: I've been to week-long conferences which were extremely intense. Unceasing intellectual inquiry, argument. At those times I have even read more than usual— sometimes a book a night. Exhausting, but you get a year's worth of education in one week, and take months sorting it all out. It's more fun than a fishing trip, and the flavor lasts longer.

*Q: Sometimes interdisciplinary gatherings are not fun. Ben, in your follow-up paper to the Michael Ryan seminar, you talked about the importance of tone and suggested that sometimes there is a tendency in interdisciplinary work to adopt a tone of superiority. What causes that?*

R: When you're uncertain, you do one of several things to cope. You withdraw completely, or you say, I'm going to look impregnable and that's how I'll deal with things. A lot of our professional training has taught us to do that.

H: It really depends on the personalities of the people, or if the situation is suddenly threatening to someone. We did have that difficulty with GITAP, but our format for reading papers, which uses a respondent and a director of discussion, has alleviated that. The job of the respondent is to open out the paper to a wider way of seeing it, and the job of the discussion leader is to keep people talking and to keep them from getting rude.

S: I think you're right that things are better. But some students feel that attitude coming out of the group, and other faculty members do, too. I think some of the scientists feel that way toward the strong humanist element in the group—that there's an attitude of moral superiority.

*Q: That's a pretty traditional split isn't it, between science and the humanities?*

S: I suppose. What I've been trying to figure out is how much of the anatagonism scientists feel has been caused by humanists. A few scientists have mentioned particular people in particular departments as their reason for staying away from GITAP.

H: Are these encounters they had before GITAP formed? Have they ever set foot in a GITAP meeting?

S: Well, that's one of the problems. Some of them aren't even in the group, and they'll overgeneralize just as much as anybody else will. One person will keep them away from "the humanities" for a long time. That's not a general attitude, but it's there.

H: Right now I'm translating a French philosopher of science, Michele Serres. His work is specifically directed to finding connections between science and humanities. He points out that for a long time we have wanted to find some easy way of solving the split between the two poles, and that we have been seeking a single paradigm which underlies both scientific and humanistic inquiry. He thinks that the single route, the unitary model, may be too simple because it leaves out too much. There *are* connections, but they are complex, and if you try to oversimplify, you impose an authoritarian model that leads to further exclusion.

*Q: Complexity seems to have led to confusion in the Michael Ryan seminar. What accounted for that confusion?*

H: The problem with the seminar was that the Ryan method was not clearly explained. And then, it is true that when something new is presented, even the most intellectually open of us are not certain we can use the method, or that we want to use it. Also, the text by Derrida probably requires more philosophical background than most of us have. Probably before we do anything like this again, we will have to have more time for preparation of the participants.

*Q: Not enough time to make connections?*

S: Yes. When I interviewed Peter Nabokov and Bob Lewis, who team taught a course on literature and anthropology [fall semester, UND], Peter talked not about being confused, but about being anxious at not being able to put everything together. He said there were so many connections to make, he couldn't do it fast enough while teaching the course.

*Q: But confusion isn't necessarily something to worry about.*

H: No, I think confusion for a while is good.

S: The other side of confusion is exhaustion from trying to keep up with the complexity of it all. Sometimes you just have to balance yourself emotionally by saying, okay, I can't work out the similarities and differences of these views right now.

H: And just give up for a while.

*Q: Let's go back to Michael Ryan. A fair amount of hostility surrounded the seminar. What do you think caused that?*

H: I think a lot of people were threatened by him at first, because he was coming in with a lot of ideas they hadn't thought of. They were wondering, where's this person coming from and why am I feeling so stupid.

R: I think there was a sense of anger when people thought they saw Ryan doing something which allowed anyone who did it to say anything they wanted and then duck away from having to be responsible for saying it, or for clarifying, justifying, and elaborating, so that others were at least clear about what was being said.

H: I agree with Ben. Ryan had a kind of program in mind, and he was extremely sloppy in reading the films [Ryan provided a deconstructionist interpretation of the films, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Apocalypse Now*] in order to twist them to his reading. It served as a model of bad reading, I think. He gave deconstructionism a bad name, and made it look as if one can do anything one wants with a text when that is really not the case.

*Q: Was there a use, even if a negative one, in the seminar?*

R: I think it was a good thing. A number of people who didn't even know one another existed had started some communication. One of the things that interdisciplinary programs can and should do is facilitate the rediscovery of an academic community. Campuses, even small ones, have become so fragmented that nobody knows what anybody else is doing. And something that breaks that down is a healthy thing. What we need is for somebody to say, well what about this? Did you ever think of? We need a lot of that, and we don't have it.

*Q: When you do ask, "Did you ever think of?" and nobody listens, is it because of language barriers? How do you work through differences in language with another discipline?*

H: We talk a lot. By getting together we evolve more common terms.

*Q: You're evolving your own language?*

H: In terms of beginning to have connotations that we all understand. We're finally beginning to understand what other people mean.

*Q: What problems arise out of pedagogical differences, out of methods of teaching, especially teaching each other?*

R: I wouldn't call it pedagogical differences. I'd call it philosophies of education. Those are fundamental, and people don't even want to talk about it. That bothers me most of all.

S: I think that some of the differences aren't "pedagogical", but are in people's personalities, in their modes of representing themselves. I have, I think, misunderstood a few people in GITAP and commented on it to someone who knew them better, who said, well, when he says this, this is why. And then I understood and wasn't bothered. I'd thought they were using a certain tactic to mean what I expected it to mean and that's not what was happening. I think that's a problem. People sometimes have trouble understanding those tactics.

H: That happened in the very first GITAP meeting where there was some of that hostility we were talking about. People were saying that A shouldn't have attacked B. Later on, B was delighted, because that was exactly what B wanted.

*Q: What about preparing to teach an interdisciplinary course? How is it different from preparing a course within a discipline?*

R: In one course I taught, we did the same kind of preparation we'd do on our own, and then we got together for two hours a week to review what was going to be done in class. We didn't come up with a game plan exactly. We spent about half of that two hours, not in a systematic way, trying to understand where each other was coming from in terms of the text we were dealing with, and the other half thinking of the strategy for getting students involved and paying attention to the psychodynamics of the class.

*Q: Do interdisciplinary courses take a lot more preparation?*

R: Interdisciplinary courses take more time, not less. And they involve more faculty expenditure per pupil. But I think they are the only way to go. We spend a huge amount of money on courses that have no effect on the students, and we say they're efficient because we have a low cost per pupil.

*Q: Is grading a problem in an interdisciplinary course?*

R: I think that is a tremendously serious problem, because that's where differences in philosophies of education really rear their heads. If faculty don't believe in the grading system, they won't believe in the rest of the course. And if students are given the impression that the grading isn't going to encourage interdisciplinary connections, then they're going to be wiped out by the course, too. On the other hand, grading can seem so inconsequential that nobody cares. People who are teaching interdisciplinary courses need to spend a lot of time coming to understand where one another comes from on the grading question, and deciding whether they can operate in the same framework. All can agree superficially in the beginning, and then, when the end comes, realize they didn't agree at all.

*Q: Despite such disagreements, it's often said that interdisciplinary work is good for faculty, that faculty development is the issue. But what's in it for the student?*

H: Anything good for faculty is bound to be good for students. If faculty are interested and stimulated and are looking at things in new ways, their teaching changes constantly. The students I speak to about GITAP are real interested. They want to come to the meetings, but some in the group don't want them to.

*Q: Why not?*

H: Because people are talking about physics, for example, and none of us know about physics, so we ask dumb questions, and students see us asking dumb questions. I'd say that's a real conflict in the group. We haven't really argued about it; it's an underlying thing.

*Q: If faculty sometimes ask dumb questions and are confused by interdisciplinary work, students must be also. Is that a problem?*

R: My own feeling about what teaching really does is that, given all the techniques in the world, the student is reached by the excitement of the instructor. If the instructor is excited, that will rub off on the students, whether the teacher is a rigid disciplinarian or a latitudinarian or whatever. If the student is enthusiastic and confused, we're in a great state. We've gone too far in education in trying to be sure the student is never confused. Questions that are real questions don't appear with the answers written on their faces.

H: I couldn't agree with Ben more. There is nothing wrong with being confused, and it is our task, in a sense, to confuse our students. The task of education is to enable students to deal with complexity, and when we teach them that life is simple, we encourage them to look for the quick fix, the easy answer, the fist or the bomb, instead of thought, debate, and analysis. Indeed, one of the advantages of an interdisciplinary perspective is that once we have taught students to solve a problem from one prespective, we can introduce another further perspective which complicates the question once again, and sends them back to their minds to struggle with the issue in a broader context.

*Q: But students often want yes or no answers. Is it difficult to convince them that there may not be a black or white answer to a question?*

R: Yes. The educational system as a whole has taught them that for years. Our students come with twelve years of excellent training to look for the answer and feed it back.

*Q: How do you deal with that?*

H: Well, in literature you just refuse. But they're uncomfortable with it. They want answers. You need to get them interested in inventing their own answers to show them that their own aren't so far away from what they're looking at.

*Q: Kristin, you're a student. Do you see the same thing?*

S: Yes. I remember when I was an undergraduate knowing so many students who had grown up believing there is a right answer to every question. But there are students who go exactly the other way. They come out of English departments, for example, saying, "You can make a poem mean whatever you want it to." And then you try to point out that there may be some limitations. But generally, as long as students are growing up, they're going to have certain educational expectations and be pushed to meeting them. There's always a right answer. There are no connections. There are no questions. They'll be going nuts for a long time trying to be interdisciplinary. And it won't get them jobs.

H: And it won't get them jobs. I think the problem is a very profound one within the institution, within the relationship of the institution to the economy; and there's not a simple thing like designing a course that's going to solve the problem. It's going to take a very long time. Meanwhile we just chip away at it in a class here, a team taught effort there, in all of our teaching.

*Q: That chipping away sometimes exposes a few raw nerves. What happens when disagreement goes beyond friendly discussion, and the atmosphere gets tense?*

R: I keep looking for analogies with sports. If you're playing a competitive game, there's something at stake and there's tension, but it's the kind of tension that when it's gone its proper course, you can walk off the court together and be in good shape. You can have that kind of intensity and that kind of disagreement, and at another level be with people socially. I don't have to agree with everything people say to like them a lot. Some of my best friends are my worst enemies.

*Q: Have you ever been in a situation where everybody got mad at each other and things broke up?*

R: I certainly have. And I don't know what you say about those situations. They're not uncommon. They're very much like a marriage. Some marriages break up permanently because of disagreements. Some marriages hang together because of disagreements. Nobody ever promised you a rose garden.

H: I'm glad Ben said that. People are often afraid of heated intellectual debate, and even when it doesn't involve them, they feel that discussions fail if people argue. But I don't see how we can do anything *but* argue. We come from different perspectives, we care passionately about our ideas, we are fighting to understand, and the other perspective is threatening. But how else do we learn? I may not be able to budge during an active debate, but I often think about things later and change my mind, or find that what I was arguing about is an addition to what I already think, that it complicates the issue and makes it richer. Perhaps debate tests our tolerance for ambiguity, for complexity. Perhaps what we resent is that it turns us back into students. But then that's the aim of interdisciplinary intellectual inquiry.

S: I agree. There've been a few aftermaths from some of our GITAP meetings, some tension, but that's probably healthier than no response at all.

*Q: I was talking with some people in the fine arts about interdisciplinary problems, and they said that you have to trust each other enough to fight. Is there an element of that kind of trust in what you're doing in GITAP?*

H: I think so. I think that as we get more comfortable with each other we can argue more, in a more friendly way. I think that it has to do with complexity, too, with a toleration for disagreements and different perspectives.

*Q: What breaks up interdisciplinary programs?*

R: The financial question. Financing for interdisciplinary programs is always tenuous at best. When people are challenged to turn their financing skills to interdisciplinary work or to their disciplines, that tears them apart, and most will wind up opting for protecting their disciplines. The world ought to care most about ideas, but all too frequently it's more interested in knowing what the budget's going to be.

*Q: Are there other pressures to stay within your own discipline?*

R: We're punished for doing interdisciplinary work. It's seen by your own department as taking time away from it. People who would like to help just can't add to their burden, and their departments aren't going to lessen that burden to let them do it. We need some change in the kinds of reward systems of institutions of higher education, but I don't know how we move in that direction. It's like moving a mountain.

H: It's not going to come at all quickly, other than in individuals going out and teaching their courses differently and looking at the world differently, and maybe with a few team taught courses that are really interdisciplinary.

*Q: At a GITAP meeting not too long ago, one of the faculty members said, "I don't like where my discipline is. I want to see it differently, to expand its boundaries and change the way questions are asked." Is that the kind of attitude you're looking for in interdisciplinary work?*

H: Yes. People who aren't satisfied, who are looking for questions instead of answers.

*For a viewpoint from a science perspective, we posed some of the same questions about the problems of interdisciplinary work to Elliot Shubert, Associate Professor of Biology and Senior Associate with the Office of Instructional Development at the University of North Dakota. Shubert has been involved in interdisciplinary work for several years, and is presently teaching two interdisciplinary courses, Human Sexuality and Plants and People.*

*Q: Why are you interested in interdisciplinary work?*

S: I like the challenge. If you teach interdisciplinary courses you have to go beyond the constraints of your own field into other areas. It's a way of learning something on your own that you can then share with others. The first time through it's a bumpy start, but the more you do it, the better you get at it, because you keep building on information you got the last time around.

*Q: Is that bumpy road intimidating? Do you see people pulling back from interdisciplinary work because they're afraid to take the risk?*

S: Yes. We all feel safe with what we know best. You're taking a chance when you go out on that fringe and start talking about an area you're not an expert in. You could easily be shot down. It's less risky to stay within your discipline, because there's a built-in respect from the students. They assume you have the background.

*Q: If you take the risk and do an interdisciplinary course, what specific skills are needed?*

S: You need the ability to synthesize information from several different specialist fields to give one cogent direction. Interdisciplinary people have to draw from different areas and present information in a way that generalists can understand.

*Q: What personal or psychological qualities are needed?*

S: Patience. It takes time to draw the information and synthesize it. I'm finding it's taking about six or seven hours to put together one lecture, and that's after I've already done some previous work in that area. I also think you really have to like what you're doing. If it's not enjoyable, then it's an uphill battle.

*Q: Kathleen Hulley was talking about needing the skills to think analytically, to analyze your own assumptions about your discipline so that you can analyze somebody else's.*

S: I think that's true. We must think even more analytically than usual in interdisciplinary courses, because when you're lacking expertise in one of the areas you're dealing with, there's a tendency to make value judgments. It's extremely important to avoid that and strive for objectivity in teaching.

*Q: Why?*

S: Because I think students should make their own decisions in gray areas. We should present them with facts and questions and let them draw their own conclusions. Students have to learn to think analytically too.

*Q: There are often gray areas in the humanities that don't have black and white, yes or no answers. It seems that in many science areas there are clearer answers.*

S: Not in biology, because it's a dynamic science. Every time you figure out what an organism is doing, it'll do something different, based on it's cycle—the day, the season, the year. Biology is similar to the humanities in that many times there are not right or wrong answers. We just don't know.

*Q: Do students come to class wanting right and wrong answers?*

S: Oh, yes.

*Q: When they don't get them, how do they deal with ambiguity?*

S: Not too well. They keep trying to pin me down to specific answers, and all I can do is give them more examples of variations.

*Q: Do you just hope that in time they'll look back and understand?*

S: Yes, I think so. It takes time. Another problem is that they look at you as the expert. That's the catch 22 of teaching interdisciplinary courses. You realize the limitations of your knowledge

very quickly. It's not that they're trying to challenge you; they just want to know. They see me as the central source. But when I don't know, I tell them so, and then I go research the problem.

*Q: Do you prefer any particular setting or environment for interdisciplinary courses?*

S: Ideally, what would be nice is something very informal, but this university doesn't have much informal space. It's all the straight lecture format, with the instructor in the front of the room, rather than a casual group setting.

*Q: What are the advantages of an informal setting?*

S: The instructor and the students are more relaxed, and it encourages a more give and take learning atmosphere.

*Q: What about the tone of discussions? Ben Ring suggested that there is a tendency for some interdisciplinarians to project a tone of superiority that puts off participants. Have you seen that happen?*

S: I had an experience with an energy institute not long ago which might answer that question. It was sponsored by DOE for five consecutive years. Teachers from a variety of different disciplines came in to learn about energy development so they could go back to their classrooms and talk about it. We went out to the mining and oil fields and saw rock formations, so they could speak about it first hand, and we also talked with people in the industry, government, and the university. There were different viewpoints, which is fine, because it gave the class some range on which to base their judgments and opinions. A problem with tone arose when some of the speakers just came in and took over the room for an hour.

*Q: How did the class react?*

S: The reaction was very negative. They didn't like it. I think a lot of them saw it as entertainment, because the speakers were animated and humorous. However, they were not very effective in providing knowledge, because the presentations lacked substance.

*Q: The institute sounds not like interdisciplinary work, but like multidisciplinary work, where different experts come in and talk about one problem from their point of view, and then the class has to do the synthesizing.*

S: We did some summarizing, but we pretty much relied on the participants. A lot of what's called interdisciplinary teaching is really multidisciplinary teaching. We're not calling it by the right word.

*Q: Let's talk about some practical things. Are there differences in preparing and structuring an interdisciplinary course?*

S: Interdisciplinary courses require a great deal of reading and accumulation of diverse information. I am concerned about providing a breadth of information without getting too detailed.

*Q: How are your expectations of students in an interdisciplinary course different from those in a specialty course?*

S: I expect a lot more from students in a specialty course and I give them a lot more information to begin with. I try to avoid too much terminology in interdisciplinary courses because it sometimes gets overwhelming.

*Q: By terminology, do you mean the specific jargon of a field?*

S: Yes. I avoid it as much as possible, except in the human sexuality course. I've had a more difficult time avoiding it there because we're talking about the human body, and I think they should know and understand their own bodies. Terminology is always a struggle, because you have to know where to draw the line between the necessary and the unnecessary. It all depends on the course.

*Q: Are there other differences in structure or approach?*

S: I give more examples. I always try to find examples and analogies to help students understand the material.

*Q: Are metaphor and analogy ways of getting over the language barriers among disciplines?*

S: Yes. With metaphor and analogy, you don't have to rely on the terminology of the field. You have a concept that everybody can relate to. Metaphor helps me as much as it does the students; it helps me feel comfortable with difficult material.

*Q: Are there problems grading an interdisciplinary course, compared to a specialty course?*

S: No. It's much easier because I don't expect them to know as much as I would in a specialty course. I'm not concerned that they have all these little bits and pieces of information embedded in their minds. They're going to forget most of them anyway, and they know that. I do require them to write a paper. That way they can show how they're using what they've learned in a way they feel comfortable.

*Q: How do your students respond to interdisciplinary courses? Are they able to make connections among disciplines?*

S: Not initially. I think at first they tend to think about things as isolated facts. And they don't look for reasons. In the Human Sexuality course, for instance, they know what sexuality is, but they don't know the physiology and anatomy of it. They know their own feelings but they don't always know why they're having them.

*Q: How can an interdisciplinary course help them understand that?*

S: It can give them a basis for exploring their feelings by going beyond the anatomy and physiology of sexuality.

*Q: Suppose I'm a student and I see an interdisciplinary course offered. What's in it for me? Why should I take an interdisciplinary course?*

S: Students get a holistic view of a topic. In human biology, I teach a segment in reproduction, but all I teach is anatomy and physiology, and that's just the brink. That's only a part of sexuality. In the human sexuality course I'm now teaching, we talk not only about the biology of it, but also about the psychological, sociological, cultural, and religious aspects. Any interdisciplinary course has to be holistic, or I think both teachers and students will miss something. They'll be dealing with isolated parts.

*Q: Is dealing with isolated parts something that contributes to the so-called split between science and the humanities?*

S: I think so. There's an inability on the part of non-scientists to understand or appreciate science. Since I've been involved in interdisciplinary work, I've noticed that scientists are often attacked by humanists and social scientists for not thinking enough about the humanitarian viewpoint. We're accused of thinking only about science, and that bothers me a little. Many of my scientific colleagues have a real appreciation for the arts—for music, ballet, and books that deal with human subjects. We aren't as analytical or as cold and calculating as TV and movies make us out to be. Scientists are real people, but we've gotten a bad name because technological development is often misdirected. Nuclear power is a good example. So was the use of defoliants in Viet Nam. But that's the fault of governments, not scientists.

We do, however, need to focus more on the humanities in science courses, and I try to. I try to talk about the non-scientific aspects, about the uses of technology for mankind. But I always throw the ball in the other court, too, and ask the humanists how much science they are teaching or talking about.

*Q: What about scientists who say that humanists look at things too emotionally?*

S: I think they're being unfair. We need to look at things emotionally sometimes. For instance, I think the chemical companies deserved the criticism they got during the Viet Nam war over the use of the Agent Orange defoliant. They were really just interested in making a profit. That chemical in small doses can increase plant growth and had some good practical applications in nurseries and orchards, but it was misused. In high concentrations, it acts as a defoliant because it makes the plant grow itself to death; it had disastrous side effects on the human population in Viet Nam, and that was ignored.

*Q: So you think scientists should not just do their research and then sit back and let someone else worry about resultant problems?*

S: Oh, yes, and many don't just sit back. Arthur Galston, a prominent plant scientist, came out publicly opposing the use of defoliants in Viet Nam. Unfortunately, the government didn't listen to him.

*Q: How can interdisciplinary courses get scientists and humanists together?*

S: They can get science graduate students who are specializing o[illegible] their closets where they're doing their research, and get them to think about some things that are going to improve humanity. But that's going to be difficult because some colleagues don't feel you should be teaching outside your specialty, because you're infringing on somebody else's area. And that's unfortunate. We don't exist as separate entities. We need each other to make it all work.

*Finally, we talked with Nancy Marcott and Mary Ellen Wier, artistic co-directors of the North Dakota Ballet Company, and Lawrence J. Hill, chairperson of the UND Department of Theatre Arts and chairman of the board of directors of the NDBC.*

*The three have collaborated for several years in a variety of dance and theatrical projects; the most recent are the annual spring concert of the NDBC and the UND Department of Theatre Arts' production of* Brigadoon, *in rehearsal when we talked, with Marcott and Wier doing choreography and Hill directing. They talked about their good times and their bad times, about successful collaborations and unsuccessful collaborations, and about how their relationship has changed over the years.*

*Q: Let's talk first about the ballet concert next month. When you're getting ready for a show, what kinds of problems come up?*

W: Time. We never have enough rehearsal time, which is a problem in any production, and also getting all the other things ready, in addition to the dancers. Something always suffers because we have to do something else.

M: Ordinarily, it's our own personal work. When we're downstairs sewing costumes, or rehearsing a new kid, or teaching a class at the Y, the thing that suffers is our own get-ready-to-dance time. It affects the quality of our work.

*Q: What would eliminate that problem?*

H: Having support staff—what are called the production crafts.

*Q: With those areas covered, what problems do you then face?*

H: Communication. One of the difficulties—and I'm thinking now of *Brigadoon*—is that too many of the individual disciplines have a lack of respect for the rituals of the other artistic disciplines. I came out of music, and I always felt that I understood musicians. Now I'm starting to work with them again and I'm right. I do, and they don't understand me. They don't understand the process of assimilation that an actor undergoes that singers quite often don't go through. There's a difference between singing a recital and singing a role in the theatre or in an opera, and it becomes a question of communicating first of all the difference between the two, and second of all, the difference in the length of time it all takes. In addition to having to teach them to sing in performance, we have to teach them to act, and Mary Ellen and Nancy are going to have to teach them to move while they're doing the other two things. That takes time, and some of the disciplines don't want to give that time.

*Q: What accounts for the lack of respect of other people's rituals?*

W: Lack of knowledge. People are so busy running their own thing they don't understand anything else. I've been in music all my life, too, and I find it very frustrating to work with people that don't understand music—dancers that don't understand music. Nancy and I work together very well, I think. She hears music differently than I do.

*Q: How do you listen differently?*

M: Mary Ellen will count out everything right to the phrase, and I'll count out everything right to the melody. So with the two of us, it works out really well.

*Q: That's communication between the two of you as choreographers. What about between choreographers and directors? Are there problems there?*

W: In the experiences I've had in theatre productions, there's a lot of lack of communication. More often than not, I didn't know what the director wanted, and I've had to re-choreograph numbers because I couldn't get out of the director what he wanted me to do because he didn't understand music or dance. It made it very difficult.

*Q: So it's a question of language. Not necessarily word language, but of understanding the ways people in certain disciplines express themselves.*

W: Very much so.

M: There are a lot of directors who are not knowledgeable enough about dance to know what is conceivable.

W: For an actor with no dance training to do on stage, movement-wise.

M: They'll have all these great ideas and say, wouldn't it be great if they could do this and that, and it's just technically out of the range of the dancers. That's a problem with lack of knowledge.

*Q: The three of you don't seem to have that problem. How do you work out what you're going to do with a particular number? Who brings what to the process?*

H: When we met to talk about the *Brigadoon* numbers, we listened to the tape we'd made of the music. Mary Ellen and Nancy started talking about how they were listening, and I said here's a possible story line. What do you think the music's saying? All three of us were coming at it from different directions and evaluating the music in different frameworks, but it all came together.

*Q: Because the music is your communication?*

H: Yes, but that's because that's what I was trained in.

*Q: Then you have an advantage from the beginning in understanding the language of the other field.*

H: That's right. For instance, the nicest thing about lighting for opera is that it's tied to a score. A cross-fade will always take the same amount of measures, and if you've got a lighting operator who reads music, it's a piece of cake. You have tempo and a justification for a transition, and it's that easy. But if you have someone who doesn't read music, that becomes difficult.

*Q: What do you do if you're choreographing for someone who doesn't understand your language?*

M: When you're working with actors who are singing, the lyrics can be an escape route. You can say, do this step when you say this word, and that works pretty well for people who don't have any musical sense. It's very hard to do choreography that way. It's tedious and not fun at all. But sometimes it's necessary.

*Q: Let's go back to last night. You were talking about working out the story and choreography. Larry, what do you as a director bring to a meeting like that? Do you just say, here's what I have in mind, you work it out?*

H: I was uncomfortable last night. Even after the third glass of wine I was uncomfortable.

*Q: Why?*

H: I've never worked with them this way. I've always worked *for* them before.

M and W: Oh!

H: I've always taken from you. I just watched the dance and did the lighting. A few exceptions have been some music that I've brought and some ideas. That's been a good collaboration, but normally when I've worked with them, I don't pay attention to what they tell me. Now, in *Brigadoon*, they're going to do that to me. A key for all artists, I think, is to listen to what your collaborator says, and then possibly ignore it.

*Q: Why ignore it?*

H: Only because the words your collaborator may be using evoke something different in you. The best example I can give you is the design by either Howard Bay or Jo Mielziner for *Dead End* or *Street Scene* or one of those plays in the thirties or forties by the Group Theatre. The original design—the director's idea—was to show the street upstage toward the harbor. And the designer came in and listened and went through all these sessions and then made the orchestra pit the river. And so they had ten year old kids jumping into

the orchestra pit with water splashing up in the air. The designer listened, nodded his head, and then took the original idea and made it work a different way. So in some cases, when Nancy and Mary Ellen and I work, I sit and watch the dance and they say what they want, and then I give them something that works. But I would never have used the same words. It's the way they talk about that dance or the way they dance that dance, as opposed to what they tell me it is.

*Q: An indirect language?*

H: Yes. It's the blind men and the elephant story. If we really see things differently and don't have the words to talk about it, we can communicate indirectly in metaphor and symbol—in shapes, sketches, and colors. A kind of private language evolves, through which we grow to understand each other's concepts of the production. How do you describe an opera to someone who's never seen one? How do you describe Ravel? You listen to it, you show a few dance steps, you say words like "underwater bells." It can become rather confusing.

*Q: Given that confusion, how do half a dozen people from half a dozen artistic disciplines get anything together and make it work?*

W: It comes down to a respect and trust for the other people working in the project. Larry watches our dances and he knows our music, and we've worked with him enough. The first time you have to just hold your nose and jump in, but now we know that most of the time he's going to come up with what we want. You have to have that respect for the other people, for the other professions you're involved with.

*Q: What happens if it isn't exactly what you had in mind, if it's like the Hudson River in the orchestra pit?*

M: If Larry does ignore our ideas, he'll sit down and explain why. He'll make us understand his thinking.

*Q: What if you still don't come to an agreement?*

M: Sometimes we know that he's not going to change his mind, and we change ours, or vice versa. There'll be times when he'll say that we've got to do a certain thing, and we'll say no. And then we have to convince him. There's a lot of that give and take that goes on back and forth. That's a working relationship that's very valuable. Even when we disagree, we take the time and we respect each other enough professionally to listen to reasons why. I'll ask him what he wants in a specific place, and I can tell him why I don't think that will work, whether it's lack of time, lack of talent, or any number of problems.

*Q: Does somebody ultimately have to make the final decision?*

W: There has to be a final decision maker. In *Brigadoon*, we may argue with Larry about some things, and it may come down to us saying, Larry, that person just can't do that. That is our professional dance opinion. But that would be the only time that he doesn't get the final word. He's in charge. On the other hand, for the ballet company, he can talk himself blue in the face, but when it comes down to the last point, he's going to have to accept our decision.

H: Sometimes you get into a situation where a director won't do that, when he believes he knows more about lights than you do.

*Q: What do you do when you run into somebody like that?*

H: Well, one of the things I do is I quit fighting. But that's partly old age. I lit a play not too long ago with seventeen scenes, and the director insisted we use blackouts for transitions. I said seventeen blackouts will kill this show. The director said we were going to black, and I scratched my original light plot and did it. It wasn't worth my time to fight with him any longer. I just said to hell with it. I've got other things to do with my life. Five years ago I would have fought it.

M: You have to decide whether the project is worth spending your time fighting for what you want, or whether you're just going to let them do what they want.

*Q: And avoid the emotional drain that's involved?*

M: Yes. If it's worth it, then you go in and you fight for it. Even if you lose you can always say I did what I could to do what I thought was right.

*Q: What role does ego play in such confrontations?*

H: My name is on the program of that play [as lighting designer] but my ego isn't involved because the people involved with the production know that it was a directorial decision. I made sure that everyone knew that. What I do to save myself is to fix it so that I'm not responsible for that decision.

*Q: How do you do that?*

H: Make sure the decision is made in front of other people.

M: You may have to stick through a situation like that, slug it out with a director, and lose in the end to save your professional reputation, so that your peers and the people involved know what your idea was. Whoever was wrong or right, the credit goes to the right person among your peers. You have to consider that—fighting through the process even though you know you're going to lose.

W: My father used to say that when you're trying to make a decision you should ask yourself if twenty years from now, it's really going to make a difference. That helps you make a lot of decisions. There were things in *Company* when we did it here that I could have fought tooth and nail about, but I would just say, it's not worth it. We'll do it his way, and this will be fine. The end result is not going to make that much difference.

M: There's another way of getting around that, and it depends on how much you want to fight and how much you want to give in. You can take somebody's idea and truly believe that it's a lousy one, and go kiddy-wampus in the back door and get your way anyway. It depends on how much you want to manipulate the people you're working with.

*Q: You mean getting someone to think your idea was their idea?*

M: Yes. It depends on what kind of ego you're working with, and thank God we don't have a problem like that around here, but there are times when you have to work that way. You have to do what you think is right, but take the back door. And then you let that person get the credit for it. That's the sacrifice you have to make. It's far worse to deal with someone with a poorly developed ego than an overdeveloped one.

*Q: Why?*

M: Because they're insecure, and insecurity is a dreadfully difficult thing to deal with.

H: The word "compromise" for some people seems to be anathema. They need to have everything done their way. There are very few people— Orson Welles is one and Bob Fosse is another—who have such a gigantic scope of the arts and crafts of production, who could begin to make such monumental decisions. Most of us would be foolish if we honestly believed that we could do it all ourselves.

*Q: With your training in more than one area, do you ever take on multiple jobs?*

H: I'm doing the lighting plot for *Brigadoon*. I'm not going to finish it, but I know how I want the lights to work. People have told me I'm crazy, but I'm not. I know the music, the characters, the costume fabric, the colors I want, and if I don't do the lights, I'm going to be uncomfortable. I just don't want to turn that over to someone else. I don't think that's ego, I think that's sensible. The only communication problem now is between me and me.

*Q: Let's talk about the rehearsal period itself. How do you help performers from different disciplines communicate?*

W: A lot of how you learn this communication process is just by being a part of it. I don't think we could just sit down and teach our dancers how to behave when you work with a musician or a theatre person. It's part of being in that process yourself and being able to click. That's a perfect word, because sometimes you just look at somebody and something clicks. It's a learning process by being part of the art.

*Q: A learning process without language?*

M: Sometimes you don't always have to have a language to communicate between fields. Sometimes you can give an actor or a singer or a dancer a step, and you know it's going to work with the music, but they're having a lot of trouble with it. They don't have the language or the skills of the dance to understand, but they start work-

ing on it, and you push and you stick to your guns and make them struggle through it, and all of a sudden they say, "Hey, that's fun! That's neat stuff!" Then you've communicated your art without the language.

*Q: Because they've done it?*

M: Because they've done it.

W: I think we can communicate in the same sense as actors who know when they've got an audience. A musician's the same way. It's when you have that hush. Actors, dancers, and singers can all have that same effect on an audience. And if they're any good they know what that feels like.

M: That's when you go away feeling that you've accomplished something, when you get that hushed reaction to what you've done, whether it's on the stage, or with a kid trying to learn a new step, or between a choreographer and a dancer, or an actor and a singer. You can get that same kind of feeling between two people.

H: I use in class the illustration that people watch football because they physiologically feel linebackers knocking halfbacks down. Audiences react to dance physiologically and not intellectually. If you are watching a dance, your body is reacting as you're sitting there. When we're on tour and working in different theatres and different spaces, I can light these two dancers without too many problems because I can tell how far they're going to move or how high their extensions are going to be that night.

*Q: How can you tell?*

H: I can feel what they're doing.

M: He's seen the dancers enough and he knows the music. The common musical background helps.

*Q: You're also talking about personality, and about empathy.*

H: About physical empathy.

*Q: What about the administration of the company? You've had some disagreements recently where empathy foundered. How did it all start?*

M: We just got too busy.

W: All three of us.

M: We didn't have the support from production areas that we really needed to avoid the collision course we were on. Larry was doing booking, scheduling the touring, setting up motel rooms, and saying we've got to get posters and this and that done, and he was passing a lot down to us. We were getting the dancers ready, scheduling rehearsals and doing costumes, and we were too busy to do it. It just seemed like one day things were going pretty smoothly and the next we were bowled under.

W: There was a lot of pressure, and without knowing it, we were feeding that pressure back and forth. I can tell Larry this now. A month ago I probably couldn't have said this, and we're back to communication again, but it got to the point where the phone would ring and I'd say, oh, jesus christ, it's going to be Larry telling us to do something again. And all of that came out of his concern that this company function well. Part of the problem also comes from the fact that he's still learning that he doesn't have to babysit Nancy and me all the time. That's not all his fault, because there were times in the last five or six years when we've needed it.

M: Larry knows he doesn't have to take care of us anymore, but there was a time when he did, when we'd go to the theatre knowing that he was going to be there for us. That's part of the joy of going to that theatre, to move back home. It's wonderful. I think that what happened was that the babysitting level got deeper, and we felt as though our working relationship was being disrupted.

H: Yeah, that's the crux of the problem. I placed each of them in a position where they couldn't do their jobs.

M: Not that we couldn't do our jobs, but that we couldn't do them in the way were were used to doing them. And we just didn't function the way Larry expected us to function. We did learn that the way we work is the best way for us to work.

*Q: It sounds as if your relationship has changed during the last few years.*

H: Yes. Our relationship changed because they did. In other words, they are not a "they", they are an "it". [Laughter] No, they really are.

W: People don't understand how Nancy and I work together. Nancy and I don't understand it.

*Q: Mary Ellen and Nancy have changed. Have you changed, Larry?*

H: Yes. That's the other thing about this babysitting routine, and I'm not sure I like it. I'm not sure I like to give that up. Power corrupts absolutely. [Much laughter] Whatever changes they have made, they haven't done it individually. They have individual manifestations of it, but collectively, whatever "it" is has changed. And that's what affected my relationship with them. I don't think now in terms of dealing with them separately but with that collective "them".

*Q: The growing pains seem to have been worth it.*

W: Oh, heavens, yes. We're doing things in this company we've never done before, and things the three of us have never done together before. But the communication problem blew our minds because we'd never had a communication problem before. And at the time, we didn't have time to deal with it. We just had time to say, oh my God.

*Q: You've been saying that the more you know about another area, the more you can understand it, and that that's good for production. Does that knowledge sometimes paradoxically cause problems because you can more easily infringe upon someone else's artistic area?*

M: When Larry was being "the manager" for us, there was a conflict between his managing and what we felt we could do as directors. There were times when he was making artistic decisions for us, and that irritated us. We felt that the artistic control and what the dancers could do physically was out of our hands.

*Q: How did you work out the crossing of roles, of Larry making artistic decisions you didn't agree with?*

M: We fought. But we wouldn't have been able to fight like that if we didn't trust each other. We knew that even though we said to him, look you're taking this away from us and we want to make those decisions and you shouldn't do it, we trusted him enough to listen to us and try to understand why we said what we did, and to compromise and not quit. Even though this was very difficult to get through, and we struggled personally and professionally, we knew that Larry wasn't going to quit. We knew we would all stick it out, and that enabled us to work through it. We trusted each other enough to fight.

*Responses to issues raised in these interviews may be sent to Robert Young or Jacqueline Davis at the Office of Instructional Development, Box 8161, University Station, Grand Forks, N.D. 58202 (701-777-3325).*

## The "Faculty as Curriculum" Exchange

Faculty revitalization and development through curricular change is the task before us at Mount Marty College. To be versed in liberal outcomes of education, our faculty must itself be "liberalized" by development (broadening education) so that they can be involved in liberal arts planning.

The stable or declining enrollments of the eighties will mean stable or declining numbers of faculty. This no-growth condition will require innovation and creativity on the part of the faculty to keep the curriculum alive and viable. Lewis Mayhew states: ". . . periodically and especially when facing changed situations such as will come during the 1980's, faculties should be encouraged to ponder the curriculum, the purposes of education, and the possibility of educational reform. Such activities stress the ideals of human betterment and probably make the institution a more humane place."[1]

In his study of faculty development done for the Association of American Colleges, William C. Nelson found that next to professional development, curricular change seems to be the most successful form of faculty development. His interviewers found that faculty development programs which direct the energies of faculty toward preparation for curriculum changes can be successful in renewing both *what* is being taught and *who* is teaching. Faculty often benefited greatly from programs which encouraged them to revise significantly a current course, to prepare to teach entirely new subject matter, or to work with colleagues in "repackaging" a program's curriculum or preparing a new interdisciplinary approach.[2]

With the thoughts of Mayhew and Nelson in mind, and with Bush Foundation funding, the faculty of Mount Marty College began to design and implement a faculty development program which focuses on curriculum. The basic assumptions for the program are that participation is strictly voluntary; student characteristics, needs, and expected outcomes determine the best approach to "teaching" a curriculum; and faculty revitalization and curricular change are positively correlated to improvement in student attitudes and gains in student achievement.

The program consists of four major components, one of which is the "Faculty as Curriculum" Exchange. The "FAC" Exchange is a group of individuals chosen to act as a mechanism for professional growth by communication with outside resource persons or in-house colleagues. The team was chosen from full-time faculty members, each in an area where expertise would assist the remainder of the faculty to meet the objectives of the program.

### Exchange Member for Interdisciplinary Course Design and Implementation

Sr. Laurina Kaiser has assumed this position. An academic generalist with proven effective interpersonal skills, she is aggressive but diplomatic, and prior to assuming the position, had available a preestablished pool of contacts throughout the region.

Sr. Laurina has become knowledgeable in curriculum planning and implementation, and has formulated and maintains a resource file available to faculty desiring to create an interdisciplinary course. She has been helping interested faculty in course design as well as in the identification and recruitment of applicable resources. At this point, her primary activities have involved working with individuals or pairs of faculty to design and implement courses for our Interim or Elderhostel programs. These have been mini-courses taught on a trial basis prior to being expanded into full courses for implementation in the general curriculum.

On an informal basis, Sister Laurina has been passing on to the faculty ideas she has gotten through various workshop presentations. These discussions primarily involve the teaching of our regular courses with a greater interdisciplinary approach. She feels that through her work, faculty are becoming much more aware of the impact of disciplines other than their own.

### Exchange Member for the Evaluation of Curriculum

Ms. Dorothy Jensen has assumed this position. Dorothy is familiar with a variety of evaluation models and techniques and is able to recommend to faculty those methods most appropriate for their needs, to explain the procedures, and to point out the advantages and disadvantages of the major evaluation approaches. She maintains a file containing sample questionnaires, tests and other evaluation instruments that may be easily incorporated into course structures.

Dorothy has been used primarily by faculty developing new courses to identify an evaluation tool that may demonstrate necessary course improvements, modifications, etc. She has also contributed her time to the various divisions, helping to design more effective instruments for student evaluation of faculty.

Although not used effectively in all areas at this time, Dorothy is available to faculty who are developing, implementing, or evaluating grant proposals, grants, programs, courses, interims units of study, etc. Generally, she works with the faculty on an individual basis, but does give group presentations when the need arises. She is continuing to build and maintain a collection of resources related to curriculum evaluation.

### Exchange Member for Computer Assisted Instruction

Robert Hansen has assumed this position. Bob is familiar with computer use in the classroom and is able to convey this knowledge to interested faculty in nontechnical terms. He is progressively becoming more knowledgeable in the techniques of instituting Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) in a variety of discipline areas and is working with various faculty to implement CAI in the classroom (Sciences, Elementary Education, Business, Library utilization, Languages, etc.) He will continue to act as a consultant for the improvement of CAI programs.

Bob has formulated and maintains a resource file of available computer software applicable to CAI. He finds, however, that his most difficult job is advising on the purchase of this software. There is a void of reliable reviews of commercially available software, and no magazine or publication gives unbiased reviews beneficial to individual purchasers. He suggests that conferences with individual vendors may be the only reliable method of determining software applicability to particular programs.

[1] Mayhew, Lewis. *Surviving the Eighties* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1979).
[2] Nelson, William C., "Faculty Development: Key Issues for Effectiveness." *Forum*, Nov. 1972, v. II.

During the spring semester of this year, Bob hopes to offer a mini course on computer literacy to interested faculty. This course would include simple word processing for familiarity.

**Exchange Member for Improvement of Instruction**

Sr. Philomene Kilzer has assumed this position. Sr. Philomene is an academic generalist considered by both peers and students to be an effective instructor. She is diplomatic, sensitive to student reactions to teaching techniques, and has effective interpersonal skills.

Sr. Philomene is knowledgeable about a variety of teaching models and observation techniques, and acts as facilitator in the identification and clarification of teaching problems. She is also available to faculty on a voluntary basis to act as an unbiased observer to aid in the improvement of perceived teaching difficulties. At this time, Sr. Philomene has not been asked by individual faculty members to directly observe teaching techniques. Rather, she has been used in informal consultation, to help determine better methods of presentation, to satisfy problems in dealing with students, etc. She views her position as one in which she may help faculty to advance through enrichment of their personal professional growth.

All of the "FAC" Exchange members have utilized off-campus experiences (workshops, seminars, etc.) to become more specialized in an area of curriculum or faculty development that then provides a network of on-campus faculty consultants. These individuals then provide workshops, seminars, small group meetings, or one-on-one encounters with members of the Mount Marty College faculty community.

We find that the opportunities provided by our program stimulate faculty morale. More excitement and energy seem to be exhibited each day. — *James R. Bowers, Mount Marty College*

**Minnesota State University System: Chancellor Makes First Round Bush Faculty Development Awards for 1983-84**

Chancellor Jon Wefald recently completed review of faculty and staff 1983-84 Bush Grant proposals and selected Chancellor's Fellows, Interns, and Curriculum Development Awards described below.

*Chancellor's Fellows:*

Professor Charles Austad; Bemidji State University; Department of Professional Education: "Progressive Education: A Model for General Education Curricula and Faculty Development."

Professor Thomas B. Jones; Metropolitan State University; "Liberal Learning and Business Study."

Professor Carolyn M. Shrewsbury; Mankato State University; Department of Women's Studies and Political Sciences: "Teaching for the Entire Academy: Integrating Feminist Pedagogy Into Traditional Disciplines."

*Interns:*

Assistant Professor Andy Wells; Bemidji State University; Department of Industrial Technology: "Robotic Automation."

Associate Professor Miriam Meyers; Metropolitan State University; Department of Communication: "Internship with Winston Press."

Professor Sandra C. Reese; St. Cloud State University; Department of Special Education: "Neuropsychological Assessment Within Hospital Settings."

*Curriculum Development:*

Professor William D. Elliot, et al.; Bemidji State University; Department of English: "International Perspectives in Canadian Studies."

Assistant Professor Mary Ann Reitmeier; Bemidji State University; Department of Social Relations and Services: "Interdisciplinary Women's Studies Curriculum."

Assistant Professor Jerry Scheer; Bemidji State University; Department of Business Education: "Word Processing Curriculum Development."

Professor John McCarty, Mankato State University; Department of Chemistry: "Chemical Safety and Toxicology."

Associate Professor Mary Ellen Pearson; Mankato State University; Department of Special Education: "Program Revisions for Special Education: Early Childhood."

Professor Curtis Bring, et al.; Moorhead State University; Department of Computer Sciences: "Computer Science Information Major."

Assistant Professor Peter Geib, et al.; Moorhead State University; Department of Business Administration: "Curriculum Development in International Management."

Professor Arnold Johanson; Moorhead State University; Department of Philosophy: "Critical Thinking."

Assistant Professor Ellen Cree and Associate Professor Philip Keith; St. Cloud State University; Department of English: "Basic Writing Improvement Program."

Assistant Professor James Sherohman; St. Cloud State University; Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work: "Development of Concentration in Applied Sociology."

Professor Robert Riedel; Southwest State University; Department of Psychology: "Applied Curriculum Development."

Professor Randolph W. Miller, Assistant Professor Steve Juaire and Athletic Trainer Kevin Cappel; Winona State University; Departments of Health, Physical Education and Recreation: "Health Skills Management in Cardiac Rehabilitation and Sports Medicine."